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231ST COLLECTOR'S ITEM ISSUE!



SPAWN

THE LEGEND
OF THE
HELL-BORN HERO

DIGITAL
EDITION

231
MAY

APPROVED
BY THE
IMAGE COMICS
AUTHORITY



"CELEBRITY SAVIOR"

PART THREE

McFARLANE

Celebrity Savior Part 3

PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN



Jim meets with Father Hallwell, a representative from the Vatican, at Sara's request. The Church wishes to determine the true extent of Jim's "gifts," offering their potential support should he prove to be of Heavenly origin. Meanwhile, in Vatican City, the first realities of the Church's ability to "deal" with threats from Heaven and Hell is revealed.

Also, Susan's final fate is sealed as Clown takes advantage of her depression to allow Hel, a demonic temptress with an unmatched lust for blood and sex, to possess Susan's body following her suicide. Now Clown has eyes and ears inside Jim's inner circle, which will give him an upper hand should Jim truly turn against him.

And on the Internet, the trio of chat room enthusiasts continues to unravel their conspiracy involving Jim Downing and his role as Hell's newest soldier on Earth.



Jim Downing (Spawn) – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the *Spawn* mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn...and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



Marc Rosen – A would-be reporter-turned-media manager and confidant of Jim Downing, Marc views Jim as his ticket to a better life – though the price for that success may be far greater than Marc knows.



Sara Johnston – When Jim woke from his coma (issue #185), Sara was the first person to greet him on the other side of the darkness. A woman of strong faith, Sara's connection to Jim will test her in ways she could never imagine.



Susan Mathews – Susan is Marc Rosen's girlfriend and a woman with strong abandonment issues. Feeling neglected by Marc, Susan seduced Jim, only to be rejected, as Jim felt uncomfortable with the situation. Longing for attention, Susan has consistently had her advances ignored, as Marc's attention has been focused on his new career.



Father Hallwell – A representative dispatched from the Vatican to meet with Jim, in an effort to gauge the true nature of his "gifts". Using Sara's faith as leverage, Hallwell is hoping to further the Church's agenda – an agenda that may be more nefarious than anyone knows.



Hillspwn, AngelsROK, Redeemer69 – Three strangers who met and bonded in a series of Internet chat rooms due their interest in the darker side of the afterlife. In particular, the mysteries and curse of the legendary Hellspawn fuel their discussions.



Detective Rowand – Craig Rowand is a detective, whose investigation into a mysterious suicide in Virginia led him, unknowingly, into the tangled web of Jim Downing's new life as a Hellspawn. Following a gruesome encounter with the demon Hel, Rowand's mental state was called into question, and he has been coming to grips with the horrifying events ever since.

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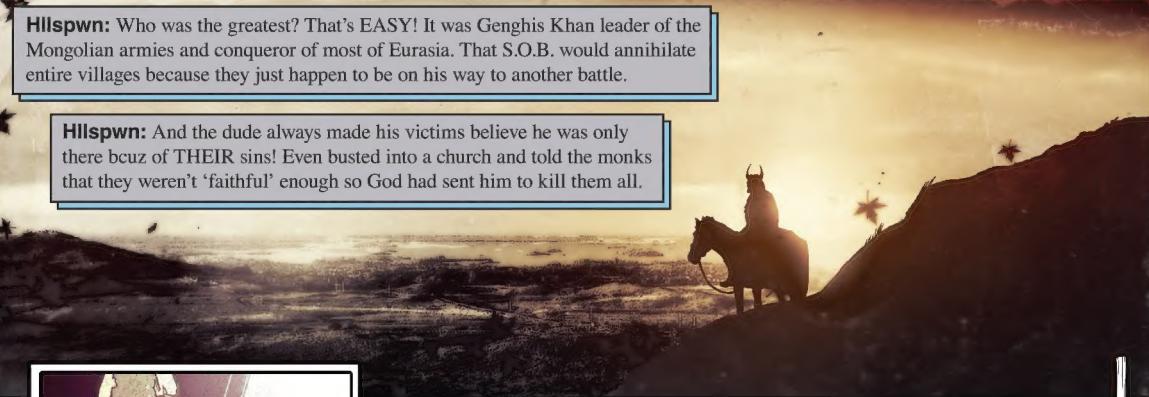
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Hillspwn: Who was the greatest? That's EASY! It was Genghis Khan leader of the Mongolian armies and conqueror of most of Eurasia. That S.O.B. would annihilate entire villages because they just happen to be on his way to another battle.

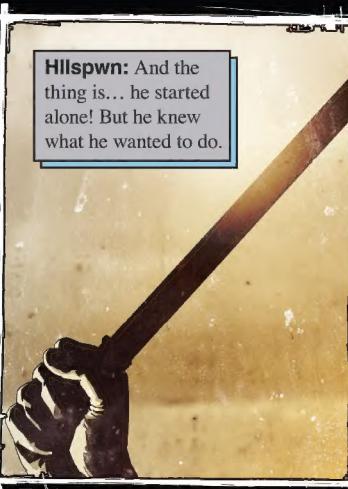
Hillspwn: And the dude always made his victims believe he was only there bcuz of THEIR sins! Even busted into a church and told the monks that they weren't 'faithful' enough so God had sent him to kill them all.



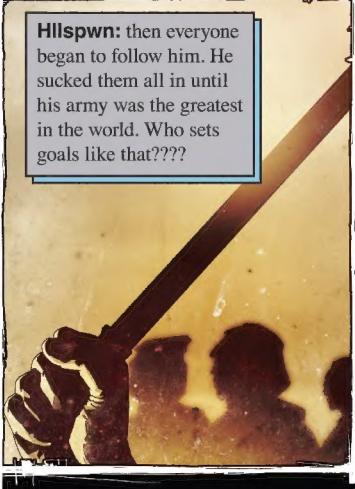
Hillspwn: gotta admire his brass balls!



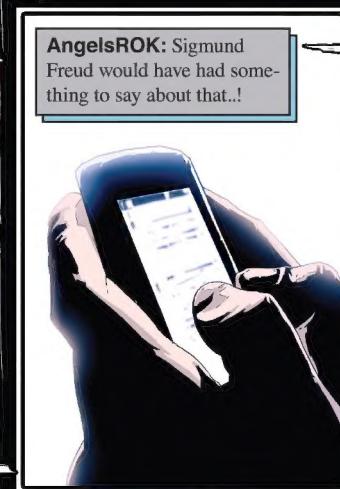
Redeemer69:
That's AWESOME!



Hillspwn: And the thing is... he started alone! But he knew what he wanted to do.



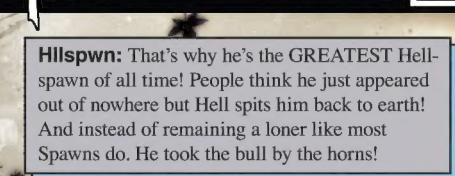
Hillspwn: then everyone began to follow him. He sucked them all in until his army was the greatest in the world. Who sets goals like that????



AngelsROK: Sigmund Freud would have had something to say about that..!



Hillspwn: Whatever. Dude was a badass. Pure and Simple.



Hillspwn: That's why he's the GREATEST Hell-spawn of all time! People think he just appeared out of nowhere but Hell spits him back to earth! And instead of remaining a loner like most Spawns do. He took the bull by the horns!



Hillspwn: I think he wanted to be God and Satan mixed together.



Hllspwn: And he let nothing... and I mean NOTHING stand in his way. The 4 Horsemen of the Apocalypse were all pussies compared to how KHAN looked like on his horse.

Hllspwn: But the best thing is everyone who wasn't on his side was afraid. That's how his army grew so huge. You either joined him or he murdered you... though he told them they all had 'free will' to decide themselves. LOL

AngelsROK: If the guy was a supernatural ghost... then why did he die?

Hllspwn: R U Stupid?! He didn't die, he transferred his soul into his grandson. Ever heard of KUBLAI KHAN?? He became emperor after Genghis supposedly died. Which he didn't.

Hllspwn: Genghis Khan just took over the body of his grandson. But it was still him. That's why the world feared both of them bcuz it was the SAME badass the whole time!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

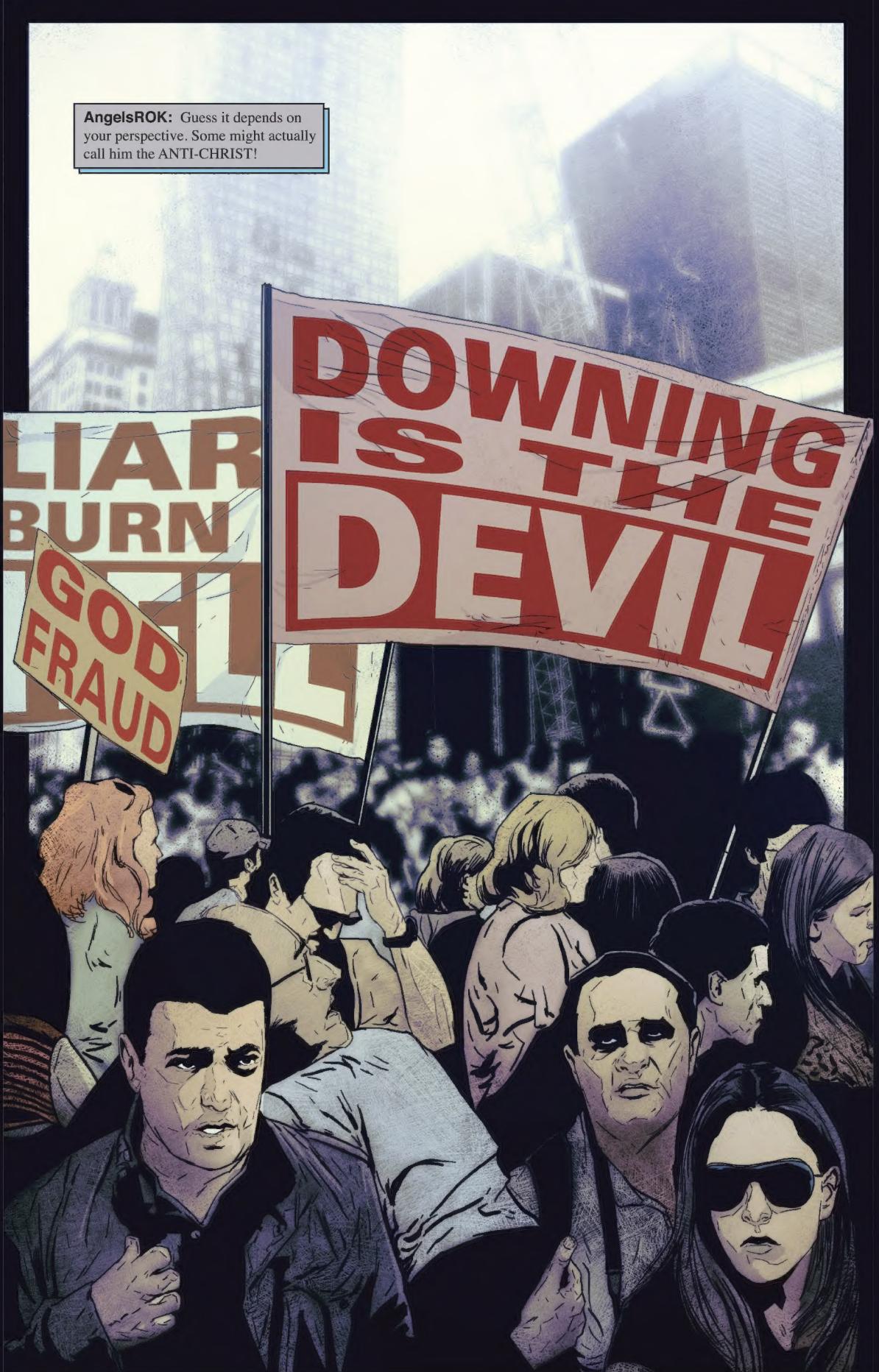
Hllspwn: And the one thing both could do was rally men together for his cause. Many times thousands of Mongolians gathered 2 cheer and pay homage 2 their leader. Do you know how much power you need to control millions at one time? Or to get people to think...

Hillspwn:
...you're
some kind of
GOD!!

AngelsROK:
Really...?

AngelsROK: Guess it depends on your perspective. Some might actually call him the ANTI-CHRIST!

DOWNING IS THE DEVIL





"IN OTHER NEWS, PROTESTORS HAVE GATHERED OUTSIDE THE CONSTRUCTION ZONE SOON TO BE THE HEADQUARTERS FOR JIM DOWNING'S RECENTLY ANNOUNCED CHARITY FOUNDATION. WITH HELP FROM INDUSTRIAL BILLIONAIRE MATTHEW RAMUS AND HIS CORPORATIONS-- SOURCES SAY THE NEW SITE WILL HOUSE BOTH FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AS WELL AS SPACE DEVOTED TO HOUSING DOZENS OF POTENTIAL PATIENTS IN NEED OF MR. DOWNING'S INCREDIBLE POWERS.



"A COMPLETE MEDICAL STAFF WILL BE ON DUTY TO MAKE SURE ANY SELECTED PATIENT RECEIVES THE UTMOST CARE AND ATTENTION. GIVEN THE HUGE MYSTERY BEHIND HIS POWER'S ORIGIN, MR. DOWNING HAS PLEDGED TO MAKE SURE HIS SELECTION OF DOCTORS AND NURSES PROVIDE CONSTANT FOLLOW UP TO THOSE THEY'LL TREAT.



" BUT NONE OF IT, APPARENTLY, WILL COME WITHOUT A FAIR SHARE OF CONTROVERSY. AND AS HE BECOMES BETTER KNOWN AROUND THE WORLD, THE AMOUNT OF OPPPOSITION AIMED IN HIS DIRECTION APPEARS TO BE BUILDING. LATER IN OUR PROGRAM WELL HAVE A PANEL OF EXPERTS DISCUSSING WHY HE MIGHT ACTUALLY BECOME A VERY POLARIZING FIGURE. FOR NOW THOUGH..."



...CITY OFFICIALS MARVEL AT THE SWIFTNESS WITH WHICH THE JOHN DOE OUTREACH FOUNDATION IS BEING BUILT. COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE EXPERTS SAY THERE'S NEVER BEEN A STRUCTURE GO FROM CONCEPT TO CONSTRUCTION AT SUCH A RECORD PACE. THIS SPEAKS VOLUMES FOR MR. RAMUS' SUPPORT WITHIN THIS ORGANIZATION. HE HAS BROUGHT IN OVER A DOZEN OUTSIDE BUILDING CREWS FROM ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY TO MAKE SURE THIS VENTURE ISN'T DELAYED ONE DAY MORE THAN NEEDED.

ALL THIS HEIGHTENED INTEREST BY RAMUS AND OTHERS BEGAN WHEN JIM DOWNING APPEARED TO HAVE RESUSCITATED AN INJURED PHOTOGRAPHER MOMENTS AFTER HE WAS STRUCK BY A CITY TRANSIT BUS. WE TRIED TO GET A COMMENT FROM THAT PHOTOGRAPHER, A MR. GREGORY TOWNSEND, BUT AS OF LATE LAST NIGHT NO ONE HAS SEEN NOR HEARD FROM HIM. POLICE HAVE BEGIN LOOKING INTO THIS BECAUSE OF THE FAMILY'S CONCERN.



SOME CHURCH LEADERS HAVE WEIGHED IN TO GIVE THEIR OPINION AS TO THE VALIDITY OF MR. DOWNING'S PURPORTED HEALING POWERS. SOME ARE SAYING IT'S INDEED POSSIBLE HIS POWERS ARE A DIRECT EXTENSION OF GOD'S PRESENCE. THEY'VE SAID THAT THE MANIFESTATION OF HEAVENLY POWERS HAVE BEEN A PART OF OUR RECORDED HISTORY SINCE THE TIME OF JESUS. THEIR BELIEF IS THAT GOD HAS CONSTANTLY TRIED TO REMIND US OF HIS EXISTENCE HERE ON EARTH BY PASSING ON CERTAIN TRAITS, FROM TIME TO TIME, TO A SELECT FEW.

VARIOUS SPIRITUAL LEADERS FROM OTHER DENOMINATIONS HAVE EXPRESSED MORE CONCERN. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IT SERVES ANYONE WELL TO THINK THAT A SECULAR MAN CAN BE THE CONDUIT FOR SUCH A DRAMATIC MESSAGE FROM GOD.



HE'S THE DEVIL CHILD!!!

I'M CALLING IT LIKE I SEE IT! AND IT'S *SHAMEFUL* THAT DOWNING HASN'T DIRECTLY COME OUT AND DENOUNCED ALL THESE '*MESSIAH*' RUMORS ALREADY! HE COULD PUT TO REST MOST OF THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING HIMSELF BY ADMITTING THAT, THOUGH HE DOES HAVE SOME INEXPLICABLE POWER TO BE SURE, THEY ARE NOT OF A DIVINE NATURE. *THAT'S IT!!* THAT'S ALL HE HAS TO DO TO GET ALL THE PAPARAZZI AND PRESS OFF HIS BACK. *BUT NOOOOOOOOOO....*

HE'S REVELING IN THE GLORY OF BEING TODAY'S MEDIA DARLING. I KNOW HIS TYPE. THEY ARE NARCISSISTIC EGO-MANIACS THAT BASK IN THE ATTENTION OF THE PUBLIC, THINKING THEY'RE SOMEHOW SUPERIOR TO US MERE MORTALS. HOUDINI, HITLER, JFK, ALL OF THEM WANTED THE DAILY ADORATION OF US ALL!

WELL, NOT FROM *ME*, FOLKS...THE NAME'S TUCKER, *NOT SUCKER!!*



IT WAS IMPORTANT TO SARA WE GOT TOGETHER - I APPRECIATE YOU TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE BOTH OF US, FATHER.

THE PLEASURE WAS MINE. I WANTED TO PASS ON MY HOPES THAT YOU ACCOMPLISH EVERYTHING YOU'VE SET OUT TO DO. THOSE WILLING TO HELP OTHERS LESS FORTUNATE THAN THEMSELVES IS SOMETHING WE GREATLY ADMIRE. SO, BEFORE WE CATCH OUR PLANE BACK HOME TODAY, I WANTED TO LEAVE YOU WITH THIS ONE LAST THOUGHT...

WATCH OUT FOR EVIL. IT HIDES IN MANY FORMS AND CONSPIRES TO ENVELOPE THE CHARACTER OF MANY GOOD MEN. BECAUSE OF THAT HISTORY IT WILL COME FOR YOU IN TIME. AND IT WILL TRY TO TEAR YOU DOWN. DON'T LET IT. DON'T LET THE LIGHT GET CLOAKED IN DARKNESS.

OUR PRAYERS WILL BE WITH YOU.





AND SO IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR INTERESTS-- WE'LL FORMALLY HANDLE THIS SITUATION FROM HERE ON OUT. AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, WITH THE TRANSITION TO OUR NEW POPE... THINGS MUST BE DONE AS DISCREETLY FROM NOW ON.

I GET IT-- YOU WERE JUST TRYING TO DO SARA A FAVOR, BUT I'M TELLING YOU, IF ANYONE THINKS YOU'VE PICKED A SPECIFIC DENOMINATION IT'LL LIMIT YOUR OUTREACH WITH YOUR CHARITY. I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE-- PEOPLE GET WEIRD IF THEY THINK THEY'RE GIVING MONEY TO SOMEONE WHO THINKS DIFFERENT THAN THEMSELVES.

I'M YOUR MANAGER! YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED ME SO I COULD RUN INTERFERENCE FOR YOU. THAT'S MY JOB.

CONSERVATIVE MEDIA FINDS OUT YOU'VE BEEN MEETING WITH THE VATICAN. THEY'LL SEE THAT AS AN ENDORSEMENT, AND THE MOMENT YOU TRY BACKING AWAY FROM THAT PERCEPTION THEY'LL ATTACK! BOTH IN PRINT AND THE AIRWAVES. THAT'S WHY YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT THESE THINGS.

NEXT TIME I'D APPRECIATE YOU GIVING ME A CALL.

JIM DIDN'T CALL YOU, MARC, BECAUSE WE WEREN'T TRYING TO 'STRIKE A DEAL'-- OR LAND A BIG TV INTERVIEW. WE WERE SIMPLY LISTENING. THE VATICAN'S CURIOUS ABOUT JIM AND HIS POWERS. THEY AREN'T CONCERNED ABOUT HIS CELEBRITY STATUS. THEY WERE TRYING TO HELP-- SEE IF THEY COULD ASSIST IN SOME OF JIM'S GOALS.

I'M SURE THEY WERE. BUT WHOEVER GETS JIM TO SIGN ON TO THEIR POINT OF VIEW SCORES A HUGE P.R. MOVE.

WHAT?! YOU THINK THE CATHOLIC CHURCH VIEWS JIM AS A HIGH PROFILE CLIENT GRAB? HE'S NOT A KARDASHIAN!-- WHO'S GOT NO SKILLS OTHER THAN BEING BORN PRETTY! JIM HEALS PEOPLE! AND NONE OF US... INCLUDING JIM... HAS ANY IDEA HOW HE DOES IT. THAT'S WHY WE TALKED TO THEM! BECAUSE THEY'VE DEALT WITH MATTERS LIKE THIS BEFORE, IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD!

SARA... I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO OFFEND YOU. YOU'RE RIGHT, EVERYONE'S CURIOUS TRYING TO FIGURE THISTHING OUT. ALL I'M SAYING IS WE NEED TO BE CAREFUL. SO AS MUCH AS YOU THINK YOU KNOW THE CHURCH, I KNOW THE MEDIA. IT'S WHAT I DID FOR A LIVING.

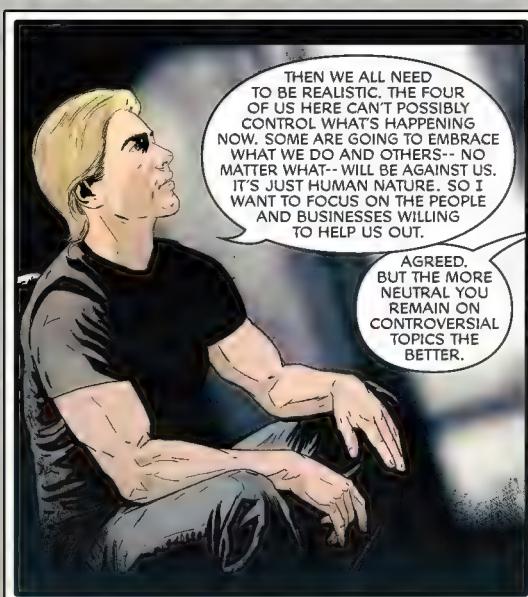
SUSAN
AND I WANT THE SAME THINGS YOU DO.



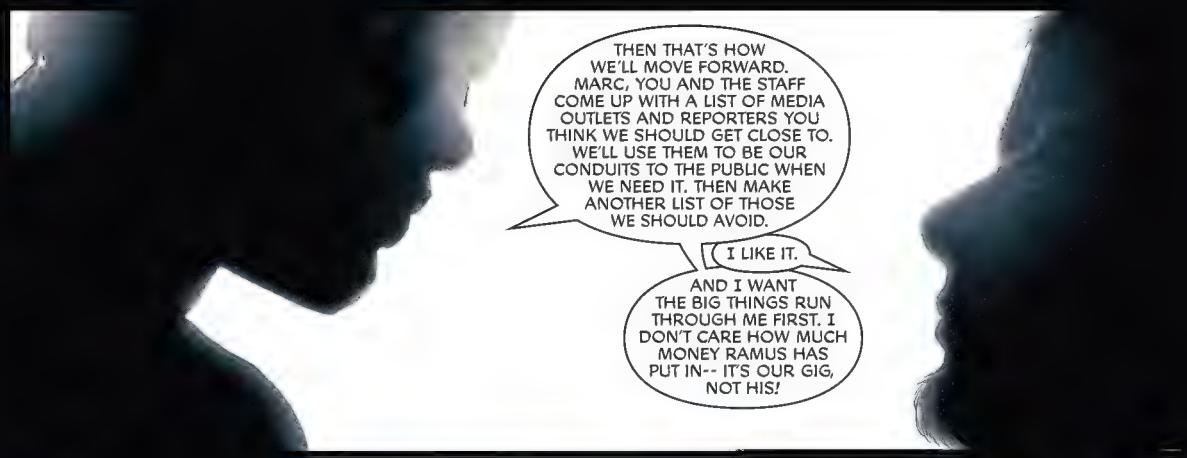
THEN WE ALL NEED TO BE REALISTIC. THE FOUR OF US HERE CAN'T POSSIBLY CONTROL WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW. SOME ARE GOING TO EMBRACE WHAT WE DO AND OTHERS-- NO MATTER WHAT-- WILL BE AGAINST US. IT'S JUST HUMAN NATURE. SO I WANT TO FOCUS ON THE PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES WILLING TO HELP US OUT.

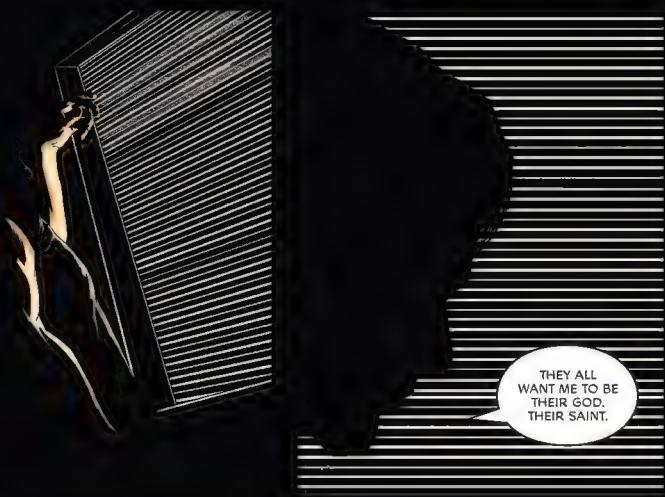
AGREED. BUT THE MORE NEUTRAL YOU REMAIN ON CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS THE BETTER.

I'LL DO WHATEVER JIM WANTS. BUT YOU'RE BEING NAIVE THINKING YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CONTROL ALL THIS IN THE LONG RUN. EVEN WITH THE GREAT STAFF YOU'VE PUT TOGETHER.



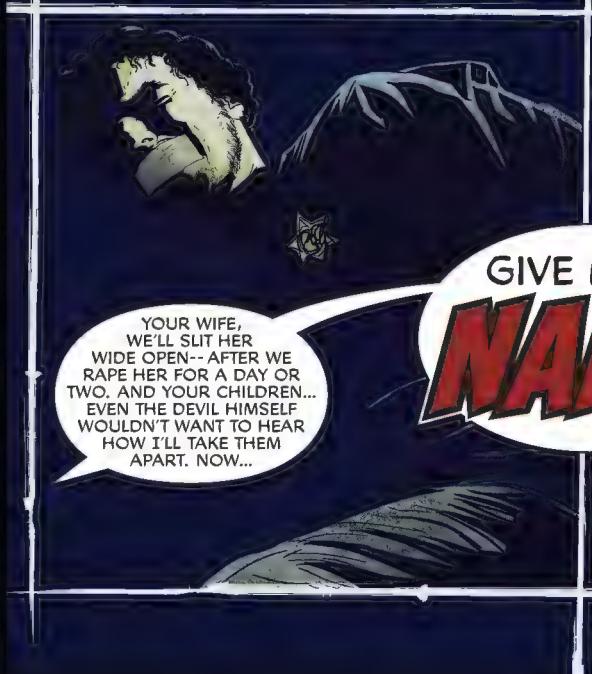
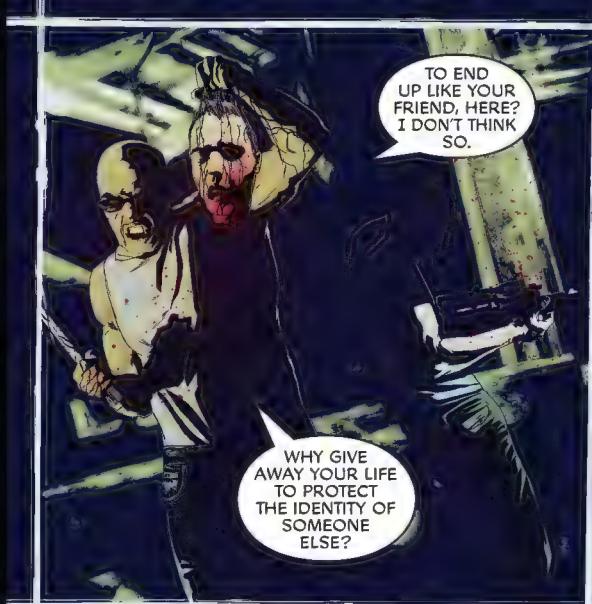








"I NEED YOU--
AND YOUR
NIGHTMARES."



GIVE ME A
NAME!





AN ENEMY HAS PUT
HIS EVIL INSIDE THE BODY
OF ONE OF YOUR FAITHFUL.
TRYING TO CONVERT THEM WITH
HIS DARKNESS, BUT I HEAR YOUR
VOICE AND KNOW YOU WANT
NO MAN TO BE TEMPTED WITH
SUCH BLASPHEMY!!

SO I SHALL FIND
THE EVIL--EXTRACT IT
FROM THEIR BODIES--
AND REPLACE IT WITH
YOUR HEAVENLY
TOUCH.

THEN...
THEN YOU'LL
UNDERSTAND THE
FULL EXTENT OF
MY DEVOTION
TO YOU!

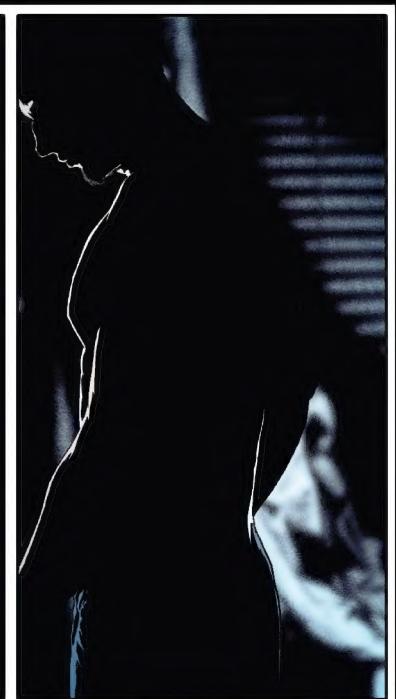
Langley, Virginia.

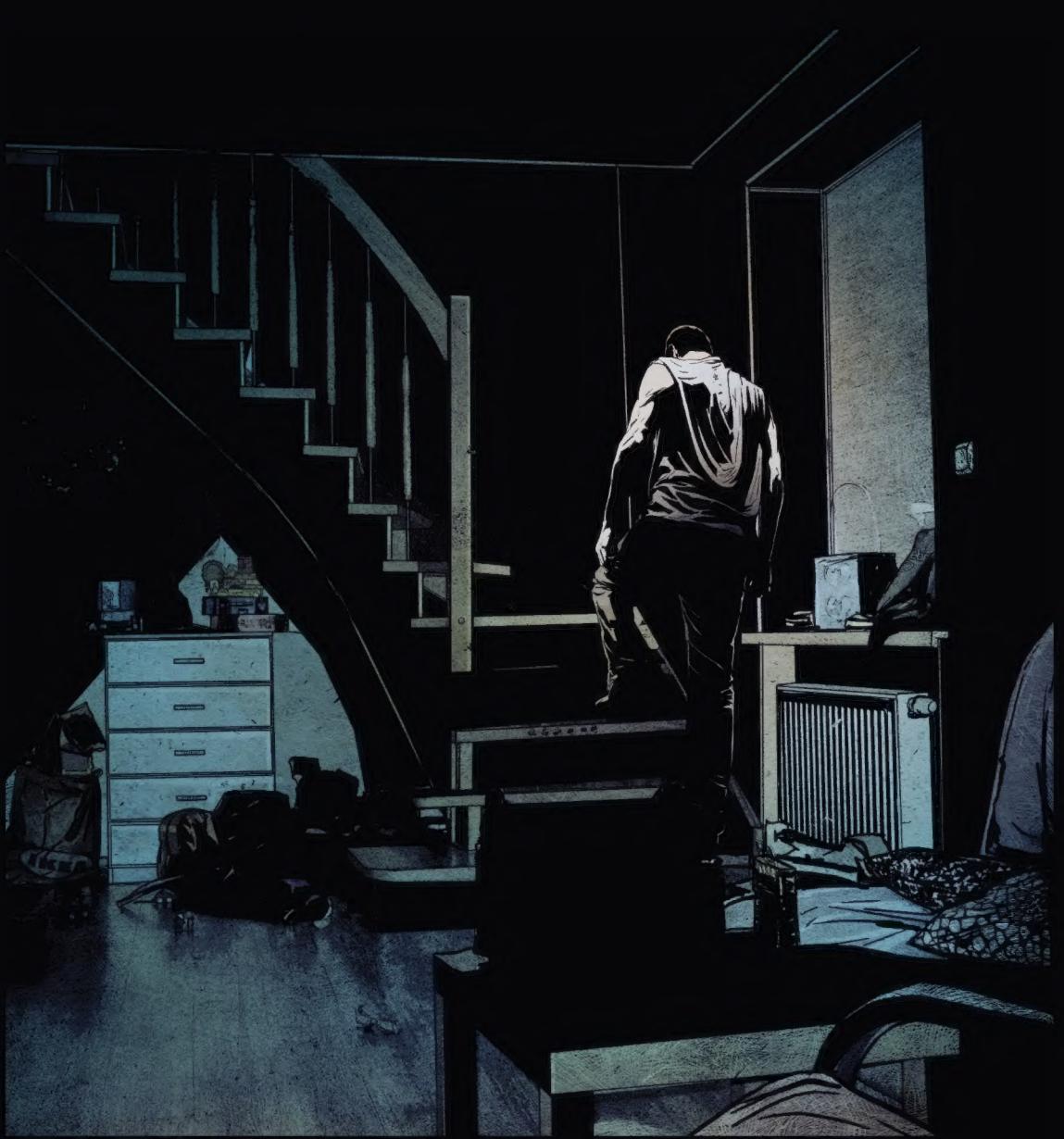




LOOK, I RESPECT YOU NEED YOUR SPACE... BUT I ALSO THINK YOU NEED A FRIEND. LET ME IN AND I PROMISE I'LL ONLY STAY TWENTY MINUTES. THAT'S IT.

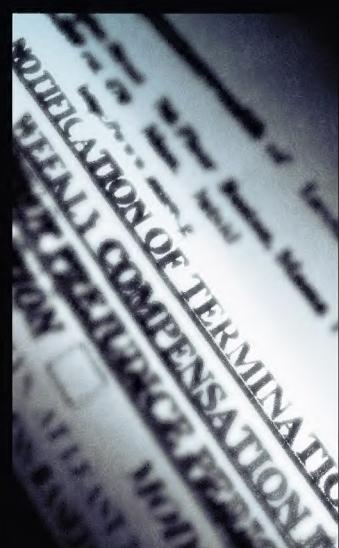
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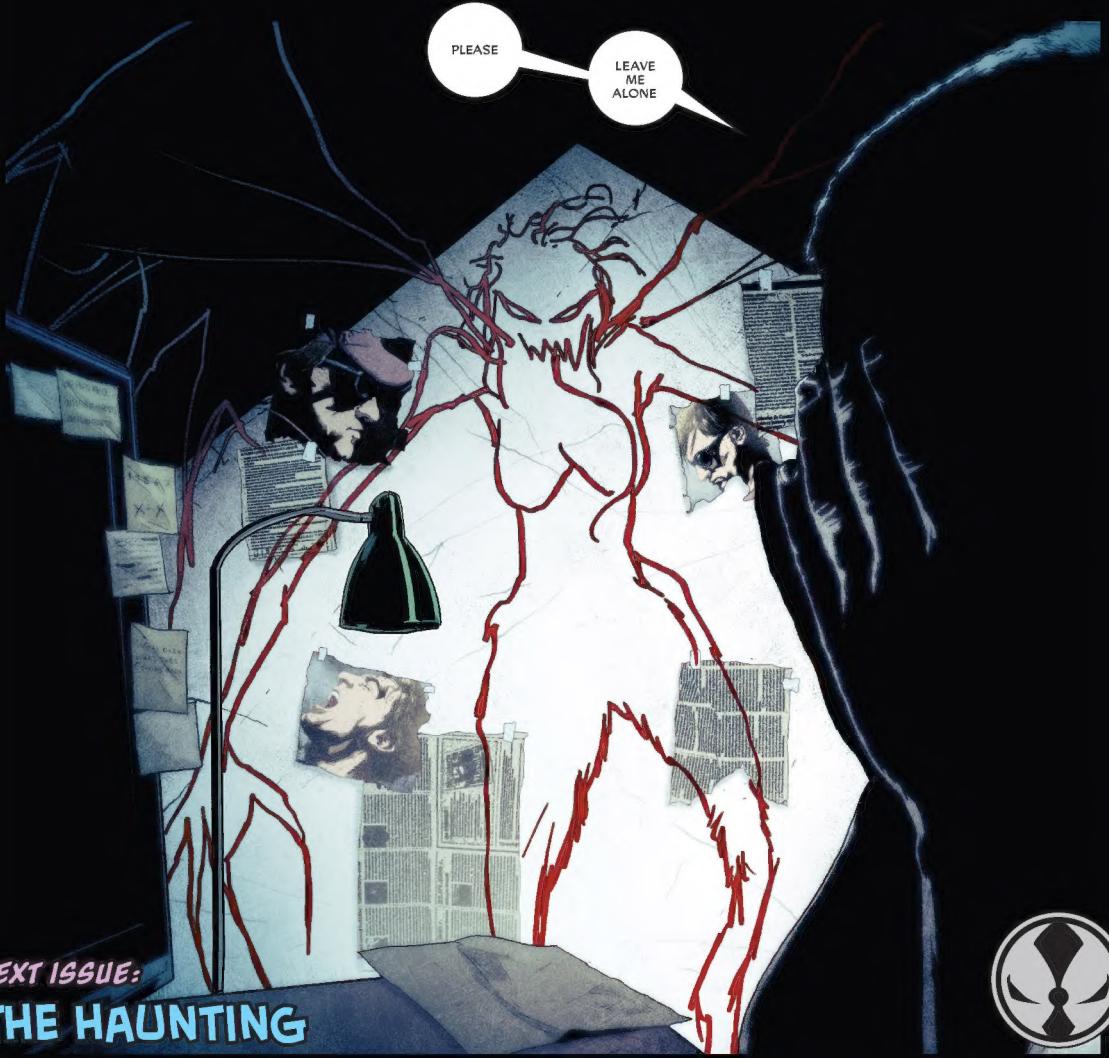




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